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The Elopement of Ellen



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The Elopement of Ellen

A Farce Comedy in Three Acts

By MARIE J. WARREN

Author of "Tommy's Wife," "The Substance of Ambition," etc.

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BOSTON
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1905

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The Elopement of Ellen

CHARACTERS

RICHARD FORD, *a devoted young husband.*

MOLLY, *his wife.*

ROBERT SHEPARD, *Molly's brother.*

MAX TEN EYCH, *a chum of Robert's.*

DOROTHY MARCK, *engaged to Max—a guest of Mrs. Ford's.*

JUNE HAVERHILL, *Wellesley '06—who is doing some special investigation for economics courses during the summer.*

JOHN HUME, *Rector of St. Agnes'.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Morning room at Mrs. Ford's home, at eight A. M.

ACT II.—Corner of Mrs. Ford's garden, at five A. M. the next day.

ACT III.—Same corner in the evening of the same day.

PLACE.—Pleasant Hill, a suburb of New York City.

TIME.—The summer of 1905.

COSTUMES, MODERN



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The Elopement of Ellen

ACT I

SCENE.—*Morning-room in the home of MRS. FORD. At L. a door opens into the next room ; at R. and C., French windows, curtained with white muslin, open on the lawn. A breakfast-table, on which is a white cloth, stands at L. front. A rocker and small serving table R. Easy wicker chairs, cushions, books, a picture or two, give the room a cozy, inhabited look.*

Enter MOLLY, a bride of perhaps two months. She wears a fluffy morning frock, and carries a tray of silver which she arranges on the table with an air of great dejection, sighing now and then. After a moment, enter ROBERT SHEPARD, through French window, C. He is dressed for golfing. He stops in surprise on seeing his sister.

ROBERT. Hello ! What's up, kid ? Wherefore does my usually slothful sister arise at this unearthly hour and surreptitiously set the breakfast-table ? Don't tell me the peerless Ellen has a toothache.

MOLLY (*turning*). Oh, Bob ! Worse than that ! She's gone !

ROB. (*coming down*). Gone ! Where ?

MOL. (*gesticulating dramatically with knives and forks which she holds*). Eloped. Last night. Through the kitchen window. With the Burrages' coachman.

ROB. (*laughing heartily*). By Jove ! Quite a little romance. I didn't think it of Ellen.

MOL. (*pathetically*). Oh, stop, Bob ! It's a regular tragedy. Here's Dorothy March, arrived just last night, and you don't know how I've boasted to her about my housekeeping. Why you know, Bob, a maid has never left me without warning before, in all my experience.

ROB. (*sotto voce*). Nearly six weeks. Ahem ! (*To MOL.*) Well, get a new Ellen, quick.

MOL. That's the way you men talk. Rich said the very same thing. Just as if it were easy to find a treasure like Ellen—neat and quiet and attractive——

ROB. Especially to coachmen.

MOL. I sent Rich right down to the long distance 'phone, just as fast as he could run, to telephone to all the employment bureaus. He hasn't come back yet.

ROB. By the way, how did you find out?

MOL. Cook came and wakened me to give warning. She said—(*Putting her hands on her hips and mimicking brogue.*) "It's not Maggie Rafferty that'll be afther stayin' to do the wur-r-rk of two!" That's why I am setting the table. (ROB. *walks about, hugely amused.*)

MOL. (*is offended*). You needn't laugh! If she goes too, you'll have to take Dorothy to New York to luncheon. You know I can't cook anything but oysters in the chafing dish, and this is August.

Enter RICHARD FORD, at the French window, c. He is rather breathless and fans himself with his straw hat.

RICHARD. Oh, I say, Molly—there you are. The Employment Bureau promised to have a first-class maid out here on the next train, so cheer up, little woman! (*Kisses her.*) Hello, Bob! I saw you on the links as I dashed past. How you can get out and play at such an hour, beats me.

ROB. If you'd once let me teach you the game you'd be doing it yourself. It is a bit lonesome, but if you won't invite any but engaged girls down here——

MOL. (*hurt*). Now, Bob, you know I offered to have Nan Van Hoozen here, and you only groaned.

ROB. Exactly so. Nan Van Hoozen is a—very estimable young woman.

MOL. That's what you say about every girl I pick out for you—and you ought to marry, Bob.

RICH. (*arm around his wife*). You bet you ought, old man.

ROB. Not with you two for a warning. No, I thank you! I'll try to worry along until Max Ten Eyck shows up. Then I'll have a congenial soul to golf with.

MOL. You'd better stop counting on Max Ten Eyck right now. You needn't think he'll want to play golf with you when Dorothy is in the house.

(She sails out triumphantly with her empty tray at door, L.)

ROB. *(dejectedly)*. That's so. I never can remember that Max is engaged. He's the last fellow that I'd have thought it of.

RICH. *(seating himself R. of breakfast table)*. Try it yourself, Bobby. Then you'll stop scoffing at us who know better.

ROB. Oh, I'm not scoffing at *you*. Molly is a model and I don't blame you in the least for being a bit — *(Raps his forehead.)* But Max!

RICH. *(comfortably)*. Well, he's gone under. Molly says they're a most devoted couple.

ROB. I don't doubt it. *(Laughing.)* My only difficulty is in imagining Max devoted to one girl for a sufficiently long time to reach the engagement stage. Well, Dorothy March is —

Enter DOROTHY L. She is very fluffy as to frock and hair; a girl who receives admiration as simply and naturally as sunshine.

DOROTHY. What is she? She'd like to know!

RICH. *(bowing extravagantly)*. A half-opened rose.

ROB. *(doing likewise)*. A beam of morning sunshine.

DOR. *(coming down airily)*. Platitudes! Shame! Neither of you exactly scintillated that time. I could have thought of something more original myself. However—thank you. *(As MOL. enters with tray of dishes.)* Good-morning Molly mine.

MOL. *(setting table as she talks)*. Why, Dorothy! What an early bird!

DOR. It was such a splendid morning that I had to get up early. But what are you doing, dear? Let me help. *(Doing so.)* You don't mean to tell me that the splendid maid you wrote me about—Ellen, wasn't it?—is sick!

MOL. *(signing to the men to keep quiet)*. Oh—my maid is in New York. She is coming out on the next train. But Bob has been out on the links and is hungry as a bear, so I thought I'd hurry things a bit.

DOR. *(wandering to window at R.)*. You're the most model housewife, Molly. I can't imagine myself doing such things. *(Looking out of window.)* What a dear garden! What roses! Oh, Molly! I didn't see all this last night.

MOL. Don't you want to cut roses for the breakfast-table, dear?

DOR. Oh, may I? What perfect bliss! I'll get my hat and some scissors. *[Exit, door L.]*

MOL. You boys go with her and keep her busy for a few minutes. The New York train is due, and I don't want her to come in while I'm interviewing maids. I've boasted so about my luck, she'd never stop making fun of me!

RICH. *(kissing her)*. Your commands are law, my dear. Don't you worry. You'll have a paragon that will put Ellen in the shade.

Enter DOR. with wide-brimmed garden hat, scissors in her hand.

DOR. I'm all ready. Oh, it's such fun being in the country.

MOL. Cut anything you like, dear. *(RICH. holds aside curtain of French window, for her to pass out, then follows. ROB. takes paper from serving-table and sits down to read at L.)* Aren't you going too, Bob?

ROB. Just a moment. I want to look at the wheat market.

(He turns pages for a moment while MOL. gives finishing touches to the breakfast-table. As MOL. goes out, L., he settles down to read. After a moment JUNE HAVERHILL enters at the French window, C. She wears a natty shirt-waist suit and sailor hat and carries a small bag.)

JUNE. I suppose I ought to go to a side door or something, but I can't seem to find one. *(Sees ROB.)* Oh, I beg pardon. Is this where Mrs. Ford lives?—Mrs. Richard Ford?

ROB. *(looking around)*. Eh? what? *(Seeing her, springs to his feet, dropping the paper.)* June Haverhill! what luck! I didn't know you knew my sister. Come in and I'll call her.

JUNE *(backing off; horrified)*. Your sister! Is Mrs. Richard Ford your sister? Heavens, what shall I do?

ROB. *(surprised)*. She certainly is—but don't blame Molly. She can't help it, you know.

JUNE *(laughing weakly)*. Oh, dear! I don't know what to do. I'd better go.

ROB. *(stiffly)*. Not at all—allow me. I'll go at once.

JUNE. Don't be absurd, Bob. I'll explain—but you must promise not to give me away.

ROB. Sure. Here, sit down.

JUNE *(nervously)*. She might come.

ROB. If she does we'll hatch up a fine story. Hurry up—I'm consumed with curiosity.

JUNE (*seating herself tentatively on the edge of a chair*). Well, I don't wonder. Of course you think I'm an awful idiot.

ROB. Not exactly.

JUNE (*not noticing his remark*). You see, I'm majoring in economics at Wellesley. I told you how interested I was when you came out to college last winter. Don't you remember?

ROB. By Jove—of course. You were going into Boston to inspect orphan asylums.

JUNE. Yes. Sanitary conditions. Well, this summer I thought I'd get ahead some in my next year's investigations—the servant-girl problem. So I went to an employment bureau and applied for a position as housemaid and they sent me here. I was going to stay one day, if Mrs. Ford would take me, and find out ever so much. (*Disappointedly.*) Now I can't.

ROB. I don't see why not. (*Enthusiastically.*) Say, come on and do it! I swear I won't give you away. On my honor. It would be a great lark.

JUNE. Oh, I couldn't. Mother would be wild. She doesn't know about this, anyhow. I'm supposed to be visiting Clarissa Newton in Yonkers!

ROB. (*persuasively; going over to her*). My sister is bully chaperon. It would be proper as anything, if it ever came out, and such a lark! We can sneak in some golf at odd hours when the rest are busy. Come on and stay. Please do! (*Enter MOL., L. ROB. and JUNE jump apart. ROB. is confused.*) This—er—young person wished to speak with you. I was just going to call you.

(*Exit at French window, C., grinning back encouragingly at JUNE who stands demurely, hands folded, eyes cast down.*)

MOL. (*aside*). I wonder why she is blushing. It isn't at all like Bob to—notice a maid. (*To JUNE.*) The employment bureau sent you.

JUNE (*very demure*). Yes'm.

MOL. Are you used to the duties of housemaid?

JUNE. Yes'm.

MOL. Have you a good character?

JUNE (*surprised; off her guard for the moment*). Heavens! I hope so!

MOL. I mean recommendation from your last place.

JUNE (*aside*). I forgot about that—I must make up something. (*To MOL.*) Well, no'm. You see I—I have always lived at the same place, and the family all died.

MOL. (*shocked*). Dear me. Of nothing contagious, I hope.

JUNE. No'm. It was paralysis—that is, heart failure.

MOL. Oh, I see. How long did you live there?

JUNE. Eighteen years.

MOL. (*surprised*). You did! You don't look more than that now.

JUNE. Yes'm. I began quite young.

MOL. You must have. But you have probably had unusually good training. I will engage you, and I wish you to begin work at once. My maid was forced to leave me rather suddenly — By the way, are you fond of coachmen?

JUNE (*surprised*). I—I don't think so.

MOL. (*relieved*). I am so glad. Well, come with me and I'll show you what to do. (*Starts towards the door, L.; stops, turning.*) But I forgot to ask your name.

JUNE. It is—it is Huldah Svenson.

MOL. You don't look at all Swedish.

JUNE. Thank you. I mean, yes'm.

MOL. Should you mind very much if I called you Ellen? I much prefer to have a maid named Ellen.

JUNE. No'm. Yes'm. I'll try to remember.

MOL. Come with me please, then, Ellen. [*Exit, door L.*

JUNE (*glancing towards window*). Now is my chance to run away. But it would be such a lark to stay. Oh, dear, I wish I dared.

MOL. (*outside; calling*). Ellen! Ellen!

JUNE (*hesitates a moment*). Yes'm. [*Exit, L.*

Enter after a moment, at the French window c., JOHN HUME, a blond, rosy young man in clerical costume. He stops apologetically in the doorway and speaks in a rapid monotone with sudden hitches, like one who repeats an imperfectly memorized speech.

HUME. I beg pardon. I came across through the garden, hoping I might be of service. (*Relieved tone.*) Oh, no one here. (*Advances.*) Now I can be a little more certain of what I planned to say. (*Sits himself R., and takes small*

note-book from his pocket.) As I become a little more experienced in calling on the ladies of my parish, I hope that I shall lose this—ah—extreme nervousness which makes it impossible for me to remember what I intend to say unless I write it down and learn it. (*Turning over leaves of note-book.*) Um—um—call in case of death in family, call on old lady, call on young mother, call in case of sickness—um—um—ah, here it is. (*Studies note-book oblivious to everything else.*)

Enter MOL., L.; at first does not see HUME as he sits reading.

MOL. Well, she seems a trifle stupid and confused but she is willing and has an attractive appearance—and it's such a relief to get some one. (*Sees HUME; starts with slight scream.*) Oh! Mr. Hume! How you startled me. I didn't know any one was here.

HUME (*rising hastily, holding note-book open behind him*). Exactly. Good-afternoon—that is, morning. I beg pardon. I just came across through the service hoping I might be of garden.

MOL. (*politely puzzled*). So good of you. Won't you sit down? Such a pleasant morning.

(*Seats herself in low rocker, L.*)

HUME (*seating himself uneasily on edge of the chair he has been occupying, R. He holds the note-book open down at his side, and glances at it whenever MOL. looks away*). As I was at my window, quite early—quite early, quite—er —

(*MOL. stares at him quite constantly so he cannot refer to his book and is consequently lost. His voice trails off nervously.*)

MOL. (*encouragingly*). Yes, it is quite early.

HUME (*glancing at book*). Quite early. I saw Mr. Ford running rapidly down the street. I feared an accident or bad news, so I came across through the—ah—yes.

MOL. (*cordially*). That was so considerate, Mr. Hume. Thank you. It was nothing at all serious—just a little domestic difficulty.

HUME (*aside*). Then my speeches of condolence will not be appropriate. I must find something else. (*Turns leaves rapidly, keeping book hidden. To MOL.*) Exactly. I beg pardon. (*Reading from book.*) And how is the dear little

one which heaven has sent you? (*Stops aghast; aside.*) Mercy. She has none. (*Again turns leaves, watching MOL. apprehensively.*)

MOL. The dear little — (*Aside.*) He must mean Dorothy. What an unusual way of asking for her. (*To HUME.*) She is very well, thank you. She is in the garden.

HUME (*dazed*). Exactly. I beg—exactly. (*Again reading from book.*) We must bear with patience whatever burdens it pleases heaven to send us. (*Realizes that he is getting into deep water, closes book and rises.*) It is an unseemly hour for a call, but I—I—— (*With a rush; mechanically.*) I came across through the garden hoping I might be of service.

MOL. (*rising also*). It was very good of you, Mr. Hume. But I wish you'd stay to breakfast with us. I should like to have you meet my guest, Miss March.

HUME (*nervously*). I am afraid that I shall not be able. My duties —

Enter DOR. through French window, c. Her hat is tied on coquettishly, and her arms are full of roses. She is laughing, and calls back over her shoulder.

DOR. You are a dreadful sinner, and I'm going to tell your wife on you. (*To MOL.*) Molly, your husband has been paying me the most outrageous compliments. He called me —

HUME (*who has been staring, completely dazzled, forgets himself entirely and exclaims*). Aurora!

(*Then nearly dies with mortification.*)

DOR. (*seeing him for the first time; unconcernedly*). Yes, that was it. Could you hear him?

HUME. Exactly. That is —

MOL. Dorothy, this is our new rector, Mr. Hume. Mr. Hume, Miss March.

(*HUME bows, opens his mouth several times but says nothing.*)

DOR. How do you do? Aren't my roses lovely? (*To MOL.*) Where shall I put them, Molly?

MOL. (*indicating empty vases on serving table and shelf*). Those? Perhaps Mr. Hume would like to help you. I have asked him to stay to breakfast with us. You will stay, won't you, Mr. Hume?

HUME (*embarrassed but eager; not taking his eyes from DOR.*). I should be delighted.

MOL. That is good. I'll tell Ellen to set another place. Dorothy, you will take care of Mr. Hume for me? [*Exit, L.*]

DOR. Let's arrange the flowers out under the apple-tree. It's so beautiful here in the country that I can't bear to waste a moment in the house. You bring the vases. (*She goes to window, R., and stands waiting for him. He gets vase from shelf, picks up his hat, goes to serving-table for vase there. Then he lays his hat down, picks up the second vase, looks at his hat, sets down one of the vases and picks the hat up, looks at second vase, lays down his hat and picks the vase up, becoming more confused each moment.*) Why don't you put it on?

HUME. With your permission.

(*Tries to set vase on his head, realizes his mistake, puts on his hat. Picks up both vases, and follows DOR. through the window.*)

Enter JUNE in cap and apron carrying a tray on which is silver, etc., for the extra place at table. Begins to set table.

JUNE. This is going to be a perfect lark. And what an economics paper I can make out of it! Heavens, though, if mother knew I was setting the table of an unknown bride! What a dear bride she is, though—so important and busy. Almost makes one incline towards matrimony one's self.

Enter ROB., C.

ROB. Hello, June. What *are* you doing?

JUNE. Setting the table, Mr. Robert, sir.

ROB. You're going to stay? Bully for you! Let me help. (*Takes the tray and holds it, following her around when she moves.*) Aren't you fetching in that cap! Do you know what it reminds me of?

JUNE. No—what?

ROB. The first time I ever met you. You remember. I came to Wellesley to the glee club concert with Faith Remington.

JUNE. My sophomore year.

ROB. And they had you dressed up as a maid. You opened the door for me.

JUNE. Of course—I remember. And I met you afterwards and hated you.

ROB. (*persuasively*). But you don't hate me now, June?

JUNE (*judicially*). Well, not so much.

(*Both laugh.*)

ROB. Say, there are bully golf links just back of the garden. Come on and play, early to-morrow morning. It's great at five, and none of the family will wake up before seven anyhow.

JUNE (*horrified but delighted*). Oh, I couldn't. I plan to escape after tea.

ROB. Just stay over to-night. It would be great. Please.

JUNE (*wavering*). It would be a lark. But, Bob, suppose your sister should catch us. She'd pack me off without a character!

ROB. But she won't, if we're foxy. (*Wheedlingly.*) Please say yes.

Enter MAX TEN EYCK with suit-case, c. He stops in surprise.

JUNE. Well, I won't promise, but—perhaps.

ROB. I say. You know you *are* —

MAX (*warningly*). Ahem! (ROB. and JUNE start. JUNE seizes the tray and runs out, L., holding it as a screen between herself and MAX.) Well, Robert, my son, what does this mean? I appear to be butting in.

ROB. Max Ten Eyck! Where did you drop from?

MAX (*coming down, sets down suit-case*). I came on the eight ten train, and it seemed so good to get a whiff of country air, after New York, that I walked up from the station, took a short cut and got lost.

ROB. And here you are at last, eh?

MAX. And here *you* are making love to your sister's pretty maid—eh?

ROB. (*embarrassed*). Oh, say, just keep still about that.

MAX. Of course I'll keep still—but you surprise me, Bobby, really you do. I trust she is pretty. I caught only a fleeting glance, but it seemed promising. Is she pretty, Bobby?

ROB. (*annoyed*). You misunderstand entirely. I wish I could explain, but —

MAX. Not at all. By no means. Is your sister about, by any chance? I know it's beastly early.

ROB. Oh, she's about all right, and expecting you on any train. I'll call her. (*Starts towards the door; then, remembering, turns back.*) By the way. Dorothy March is in the garden.

MAX. Thunder! Is she here? How—delightful.

ROB. (*coming back to shake hands*). I haven't seen you since you—since it happened. Congratulations.

MAX (*mournfully*). Thanks, old man.

ROB. (*looks at him curiously; starts to speak, checks himself, and starts towards door; then turns back*). I say—is anything up? You don't look as radiant as Molly led me to expect.

MAX. I'm a happy man, Bob. No, hang it all, I'm not. I can't lie to you. I'm in a beastly fix.

ROB. (*cordially*). I'm glad to hear it—that is—I'm glad you're telling me. Can I help?

MAX (*drops mournfully into chair*). Nobody can.

ROB. What's up?

(*He pulls chair from breakfast-table and sits astride of it, facing MAX.*)

MAX. Well, you know, Aunt Day——

ROB. The one with several hundred thousand.

MAX. Yes. And I was always her favorite nephew.

ROB. And you thought——

MAX. Exactly.

ROB. Didn't she?

MAX. Well, yes. That's the rub. She left me twenty-five thousand—provisionally.

ROB. And the provision was——

MAX. That I marry Dorothy March. (ROB. *whistles*; MAX *risks and walks about.*) That is not the worst of it. She also left Dorothy twenty-five thousand with the provision that she marry me.

ROB. (*rising energetically*). Well, I'll be hanged!

MAX. Thanks, old man! (*They shake hands solemnly.*) Of course I had to give her a chance to refuse. I didn't know that she—liked me.

ROB. And she does! Holy smoke!

(*They look at each other helplessly for a moment. Then MAX turns away a bit shamefacedly.*)

MAX. It was particularly inopportune——

ROB. You don't mean to say there was another girl?

MAX. Well, yes, rather.

ROB. What do you mean?

MAX. Well, she was such a jolly little thing—awfully sensible for a girl—splendid golf player, too. I met her at a house-party in the spring. I didn't intend to, but I guess I got in rather deep.

ROB. You proposed to her?

MAX. I might as well make a clean breast of it to you, old man. I did and she turned me down. But I said if she ever changed her mind that I should be—well, that I never should —

ROB. True till death. (MAX *nods mournfully*.) You are in a mess. Jove, who'd have thought you'd turn out such a heart-breaker. (*Laughing*.)

MAX (*huffily*). It's no laughing matter. Suppose that girl should change her mind?

ROB. Think there's any danger?

MAX. I don't know. I've been living in fear of it for weeks. You see I—expressed myself rather strongly.

ROB. So I should judge. Wonder if I know the girl.

MAX. I don't think so. Her name is Haverhill—June Haverhill.

ROB. (*repeats in dismay*). June Haverhill!

Enter MOL., L., and comes forward delightedly on seeing MAX.

MOL. Why, Max! How splendid. (*Shakes hands. Then to ROB.*) Bad boy, why didn't you call me?

ROB. (*incoherently*). I don't know. I will, now! (*Aside.*) June Haverhill! Oh, the deuce! (*Dashes out, L.*)

MOL. What did he say? Oh, perhaps he thought I said to call Dorothy. Have you seen her yet, Max? She is in the garden.

MAX. Not yet. Bob told me she was here.

MOL. How happy she will be to know that you have come.

MAX (*mournfully*). Do you really think so?

MOL. (*sympathetically*). I know it. And Max—you know it isn't very long since Rich and I were engaged, so we understand everything. We are going to leave you and Dorothy alone together just as much as we can.

MAX. Thank you. (*Eagerly*.) But don't put yourself out! I wouldn't have you do that for worlds.

MOL. It won't put me out in the least. It will be perfectly

dear having a pair of lovers in the house. Dorothy is so pensive whenever I speak of you. I know that her every thought is on your coming.

(Just at this moment DOR. pulls aside the curtain of C. window and comes in. Her hat is hanging over her arm and she wears a red rose in her hair. She does not look into the room at all, but stands holding the curtain aside and talking to some one outside.)

DOR. Be careful! Don't spill the water! Look out for the step! *(Enter HUME with a vase of roses in each hand. He wears his hat. His face is wreathed in smiles, and a red rose, twin to DOR.'s, adorns his button-hole.)* Put one there. *(Turning to point to the breakfast-table, sees MAX. Her smile fades. She heaves a bored little sigh and advances.)* Why, how do you do, Max?

MAX. How do you do, Dorothy?

(They shake hands very conventionally.)

DOR. I hope you are well.

MAX. Thank you. Very.

MOL. *(aside)*. The dear things. They are so embarrassed. Oh, it's such fun having lovers in the house. *(HUME has stood perfectly still, just inside the window, holding the vases stiffly. His blissful smile has gradually faded into his habitual expression of nervous embarrassment. He now gives a little cough, and MOL. and DOR. rush towards him simultaneously, each taking a vase.)* The idea! How very forgetful of me.

(Sets vase on serving table, L.)

DOR. What a shame, to make you hold them.

(Sets vase on breakfast-table, and busies herself rearranging roses in it.)

HUME. I beg pardon. Thank you.

(Removes his hat with an air of relief; MOL. puts the hat on table, L.)

MOL. Mr. Hume, this is Mr. Ten Eyck. Max, Mr. Hume is our new rector.

(They shake hands, eyeing each other askance.)

Enter ROB., L., much worried.

ROB. (*aside*). Can't see her alone a second. That cook is omnipresent. I must warn her somehow. (*Starts out again.*)

MOL. (*bustling about*). Breakfast is all ready. Where are you going, Bob?

ROB. To find Richard.

MOL. Oh, he is coming right in. We won't wait for him. Will you sit here, Mr. Hume?

(*Seats herself at head of table, L. end, placing HUME at her L.*)

DOR. (*seating herself*). I choose to sit beside Rich.

MOL. Of course. Max, will you come here, at my right? (*To ROB., who is again trying to escape.*) Where are you going, Bob?

ROB. To call Ellen.

MOL. Nonsense. I have my bell. (*Strikes it.*) Come and sit in Rich's place, will you? I can't understand why he is so late.

(*ROB. goes slowly to his seat watching the door apprehensively. The others are seated as follows: ROB. at right end of table, MOL. at left end; DOR. back of table, next to ROB., facing audience, MAX the same at MOL.'s end; HUME front of table at MOL.'s end, back to audience. As JUNE enters, ROB. tries to signal to her, but she keeps her eyes demurely cast down. She carries a tray on which is a glass dish of fruit which she passes, first to MOL., then MAX. MAX glances up, and rises hastily from his chair, staring at her. JUNE starts, opens her lips to speak, closes them again, and stiffly offers fruit. MAX sinks back into his chair, still looking fixedly at her, and slowly raises his hand to take fruit as*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

SCENE.—*A corner of MRS. FORD'S garden at five o'clock in the morning. Across the back extends the garden wall with a gate, C. At R. is a rustic table with a chair at each side of it; at L. is a garden bench, on which lies a bag of golf sticks.*

(*ROB. is discovered walking up and down. He pauses, looks at his watch, and continues walking with the air of a man given over to impatience.*)

ROB. I wonder if June has forgotten that she promised to golf with me at five. She wouldn't give me a chance to speak to her yesterday after breakfast—seemed to take delight in eluding me. Jove! how thunderstruck old Max was when he saw her. She bluffed it out beautifully, though. Wonder if she does care for him. He seemed to think she was just on the verge of a violent attachment. *He* kept out of my way all day, too. Don't blame him! (*Looks at his watch.*) Nearly-quarter past five. Hang it all, if June doesn't come in ten minutes I'll leave a note for Molly and go down to New York. I'm tired of this mysterious atmosphere. No telling what'll happen next.

Enter JUNE, hastily, L.

JUNE (*breathlessly*). I ran every step. Have you been waiting long?

ROB. Only a few minutes. Here, sit down and get your breath. It's a shame you ran.

JUNE (*sinks into chair at L. of table; gasps occasionally as she speaks*). Why, you see, just as I sneaked out of the side door, I heard a window open, just over my head. I didn't dare to look and see who it was, but I know somebody saw me escaping. I ran for dear life.

ROB. Molly probably thinks her new maid has eloped. (*Mischievously, yet half seriously.*) Come on. Let's!

JUNE (*jumping up with alacrity*). All right! Let's! (*As he takes a step towards her eagerly.*) As far as the links. Further I will not go without gloves. It wouldn't be proper.

ROB. (*pretending to sulk*). And you might prefer a different companion. Max, for instance.

JUNE (*gaily*). Why in the world didn't you tell me that he was here? I nearly deluged you all with fruit, not to speak of the nervous shock! But didn't I do pretty well?

ROB. I didn't know that you knew him until too late to warn you. You carried it off beautifully.

JUNE. Thanks. But I am not at all sure I deceived him. He tried to speak to me several times during the day.

ROB. The cad!

JUNE. Not at all! You tried to speak to me yourself.

ROB. I know I did, but then (*with intent*)—I am not engaged to Dorothy March.

JUNE (*amazed*). You don't mean to say that *he* is.

ROB. (*watching her narrowly*). I should say. Didn't you know it?

JUNE (*smiling reminiscently*). Well, he didn't seem to be the last time I conversed with him—— But what about our golf? I trust you have some sticks for me to use.

ROB. (*getting bag from bench*). Molly's. Wouldn't she be wild?

JUNE (*rolling up her shirt-waist sleeves*). Your sister Molly is a dear. Truly I'm awfully sorry for playing such a trick on her. And I can't bear to run off and leave her maidless with all these guests on her hands. To-day, though, I must disappear.

ROB. Hang it! Well, come on! We'll at least have one game before you go. (*Taking "driver" from bag.*) Here you are.

JUNE (*addressing imaginary ball and glancing up mischievously*). I trust you don't mind being beaten by a girl.

ROB. (*gaily*). Boaster! Pride goeth before a fall.

JUNE. Come, and I'll make my boasting good.

(*They go out through the garden gate together.*)

Enter HUME at R. He looks poetically melancholy, slightly disheveled, and wears a much faded red rose in his button-hole.

HUME (*crossing stage, looking off L.*). That must be her window which I see through the trees. I feel that it is her window! Behind those filmy curtains, she sleeps, my lady sleeps, sleeps, sleeps. (*Coming down.*) I have not been able

to sleep. I wish I had ! I have wandered in the garden nearly all night, trying to compose my thoughts for the writing of my next sermon. The only text which occurs to me is "Love one another." (*Sinks into chair by the table.*) A clergyman ought to marry. It is his duty to his church. Yes, undoubtedly. But I should never be able to summon courage to tell her of my devotion. She might consider it rather sudden. It is rather sudden. (*Sighs.*) But who could have resisted her among the roses ? I might write to her. I might say — (*Muses a moment, then draws from his pocket note-book and pencil.*) I will draft a letter now while the inspiration of the morning solitude is upon me. (*Writes.*) "My be-loved." (*He pauses now and then, lost in thought, then writes with satisfied air.*) "I am here be-cause I must be near you. I cannot stay a-way. You will doubt-less con-sid-er this sud-den, but my love has bu-urst into flame. Meet me here this evening at ten, if there is any—hope—for—me. I am wholly thine." (*Pauses, nibbling his pencil reflectively.*) That is good. It is convincing. A word more would spoil it. I will simply sign my initials. Her heart will tell her whence the letter comes. (*Writing.*) "J. H." (*Leaves book and pencil on table and rises, going towards L.*) I will copy and send it to-day. How adorably she will conduct the mission sewing classes—and the mothers' meetings ! Yes, a clergyman undoubtedly should marry. (*Stops suddenly, listening.*) Heavens, I hear steps ! Some one is approaching. It will not do for me to be discovered here at this unseemly hour. It might be greatly misunderstood—greatly misunderstood.

(*He walks about nervously and goes out, R., just as MAX enters, L.*)

MAX (*somewhat excited*). It was June. It must have been June. I should know June anywhere. I recognized her step on the porch, and herself as she ran across the grass. I followed as soon as possible, but she is nowhere about the grounds. What does it all mean ? Why is she masquerading here ? Why ? Why ? (*Sinks down on bench, L., clasping his head in his hands.*) I must speak to her. Suppose she had learned of my engagement—had come to claim my promise. Perhaps I'd better leave. (*Enter DOR. She has a long-stemmed red rose in her hand. She stops abruptly on seeing MAX and they stare at each other for a moment blankly.*) G-g-good-morning.

DOR. Good-morning. I didn't know anybody was about.

MAX. It is very early—not six yet.

DOR. I know it, but I couldn't sleep, so I came out of doors. The birds wakened me first, I think, and then I kept hearing mysterious footsteps in the house and in the garden. It seemed as though every one must be up—so I got up, too.

MAX (*inanely*). Yes. How nice. So did I. (*After a moment's embarrassed pause.*) Won't you—sit down?

DOR. Thank you.

(*Sits on the bench. MAX sits beside her. Then MAX takes her hand with the obvious air of doing the correct thing.*)

MAX. I am glad you came out.

DOR. (*drawing away her hand*). Don't.

MAX. Why not? We are engaged.

DOR. (*with a bored little sigh*). Yes. I suppose so.

(*Gives him her hand uninterestedly.*)

MAX (*after a moment*). Won't you give me a rose, Dorothy?

DOR. No. I'd rather not.

MAX (*piqued*). Why not? You gave one to that rector chap yesterday. How you could stand to have him following you about all day, I can't see. He impressed me as being utterly inane.

DOR. (*gently withdrawing her hand*). At least he did not seem bored to death when he had to talk to me.

MAX (*rising*). What do you mean?

DOR. (*composedly, smelling her rose*). Oh, nothing at all. But I don't see how you found time to notice Mr. Hume. Every time I saw you, you were engrossed in staring at Molly's pretty housemaid—Ellen, isn't it?

MAX (*confused*). Do you—ah—doubt my love?

DOR. (*easily*). Oh, don't be a goose, Max. It's bad enough to have to appear devoted when Molly is around. When we are alone, do let's be sensible.

MAX (*thoroughly surprised*). I don't understand.

DOR. Yes, you do. It's so simple.

MAX. Don't you—do you mean to say you don't—love me, Dorothy?

DOR. (*rising*). It seems to me that this discussion is both unpleasant and unnecessary.

MAX (*growing a bit angry*). I insist upon an answer.

DOR. (*shrugging*). Well, then—here it is. No. I can't bear you.

MAX (*amazed*). But you said ——

DOR. Not at all! You never asked me before. You asked me if I would marry you. That's quite another thing. I had to accept, you know, or else make you lose twenty-five thousand.

MAX (*angry*). Had to accept! Why, great scott! I had to ask you!

DOR. (*fast losing her temper*). What do you mean?

MAX. Just what I say. If I hadn't proposed *you* would have lost twenty-five thousand. You didn't suppose I wanted to ——

DOR. (*almost crying with vexation*). How dare you say such things to me! (*Trying to remove her ring.*) Here—I won't wear it another minute. (*The ring does not come off easily. In order to remove it she lays her rose on the table, then tears off the ring and holds it out to MAX.*) Take it quickly!

MAX (*dropping the ring into his pocket*). I shall keep it as a souvenir of our escape.

DOR. Oh, I hate you, hate you! I never want to see or hear of you again.

MAX. Thank you for your frankness. May I say that the wish is mutual? (*He turns away, then comes back.*) In order that your wish may be granted I shall be obliged to trouble you for a moment longer. We shall each have to write out a statement refusing the terms of the will.

DOR. Let me do it at once, then. The more quickly the matter is ended the happier I shall be.

MAX. Very well. By all means. (*Feeling in his pockets, produces a fountain-pen.*) Here is a fountain-pen. I am afraid that I have no paper.

DOR. (*picking up the note-book left by HUME*). Here is a note-book with some blank pages. We can use these.

MAX. Anything will do. (*DOR. tears several pages from the note-book, seating herself at the table. MAX hands her the fountain-pen and sits opposite her. She vainly shakes the pen which refuses to flow. MAX, after watching her efforts for a moment sympathetically.*) Damn!

DOR. (*gratefully*). Yes. Thank you. (*After another fruitless effort.*) You haven't a pencil?

MAX (*feeling in his pockets*). I'm afraid not. (*Sees pencil left by HUME on the table.*) Yes, here is one.

(DOR. *takes the pencil and writes rapidly, pausing now and then to muse.* MAX, *after a moment's trouble with the pen, also writes.*)

DOR. (*glancing up; aside*). How nice the top of his head is. I never noticed that before. Horrid beast! (*Writes again.*)

MAX (*glancing up; aside*). Jove! She certainly is pretty when she loses her temper. Little spitfire! (*Writes again.*)

DOR. (*glancing up; aside*). He is so nice and big. His shoulders are splendid.

(*Sighs and writes again.*)

MAX (*glancing up; aside*). The sun on that hair is certainly pretty. How long her eyelashes are.

(*Sighs and writes again.*)

DOR. (*rising*). Finished.

MAX (*after a moment rises also*). Finished.

DOR. Ought we to read them?

MAX. As you like.

DOR. If it isn't a necessary formality, I guess I'd rather—not.

(MAX *holds out his hand across the table for the paper.* She *gives it to him and he takes her hand also.* She *looks at him, startled.*)

MAX. Dorothy——

DOR. We aren't engaged any more. You mustn't.

MAX. But can't we be very good friends, now that the misunderstanding is explained? Please say yes.

DOR. (*dropping her eyes*). Why—yes, Max.

MAX. Thank you.

(*He reluctantly releases her hand and she slowly moves away from the table. Half way across the stage she stops, and turns.*)

DOR. (*hesitatingly*). Max—if you don't mind—perhaps we'd better not tell Molly we've—decided not to. She'd feel dreadfully to have it—happen—here.

MAX (*eagerly*). You are quite right. It is our duty to Molly to keep it secret. (*DOR. goes slowly off C., turning to glance back at him just as she disappears. MAX leaves the papers on the table and follows her a few steps impetuously, then stops.*) What a blind fool I've been! She is adorable—adorable! Hang it all, why couldn't I have appreciated my luck and not thrown it away. She seemed a little sorry, too. Perhaps—well, anyway, I'll try.

(*He goes out C., just as MOL. appears hastily from L. and RICH. from R. They meet in C. of the stage.*)

MOL. You haven't found any traces?

RICH. I trotted all around the garden and didn't see a soul.

MOL. I heard voices here. I know I did. But when I got here, they were gone. Rich, I *know* Ellen has eloped again—I mean my new Ellen. Oh, dear, what shall I do?

RICH. What makes you so certain, dear? She may have only gone for a walk.

MOL. (*dropping down despairingly on the bench*). Maids don't go walking at five in the morning. And then, there was so much rustling and whispering, and talking in the garden. The longer I listened the more certain I grew that it was Ellen.

RICH. And she isn't in the house, you are sure?

MOL. (*disconsolately*). Of course I'm sure. When I couldn't stand it any longer I got up and looked for her. I know she has eloped!

RICH. Who could she have eloped with?

MOL. Oh, somebody's gardener—or the milkman. She said she wasn't fond of coachmen. (*RICH. laughs heartily. MOL. on the verge of tears.*) I don't see how you can be so abominable! You *know* that now I shall have to own up to Dorothy, and you *know* she'll make fun of my housekeeping. And you can stand there and just laugh.

RICH. (*putting his arm around her*). There, dear! Now I'm as solemn as a judge. What can I do about it?

MOL. Please go right down to the long distance telephone and call up the Employment Bureau.

RICH. But dear, suppose she has gone for a walk. Wouldn't it be a little awkward?

MOL. Rich, if you had so much as looked at her you'd have known she was going to elope. She was so attractive. Why I even saw Bob and Max trying to speak to her.

RICH. Then you want an unattractive maid this time?

MOL. (*delightedly*). Rich, what a splendid idea ! Over forty and plain.

RICH. (*obediently*). Over forty and plain.

MOL. And you'll run every step of the way ?

RICH. Every step.

(*Kisses her and starts off on a trot ; exit, R.*)

MOL. (*disconsolately*). Oh, dear. I don't see why I should have such luck. And the lawn party comes to-night. I'll just walk around and decide where to have the lanterns hung, while I wait for Rich.

(*Goes out L., as MAX enters C., very hastily.*)

MAX. Heavens ! I forgot those papers ! I hope no one has seen them. I was sure I saw a white frock through the trees. (*Finds papers on table.*) Here they are. Just my nervousness I suppose. (*Looking over papers.*) This must be Dorothy's. (*Reading.*) "By refusing to marry Max Ten Eyck ——" Well, if I can't make her change her mind it won't be because I haven't tried. (*Folds paper and puts it in his pocket.*) As for mine —— (*Starts to tear paper, then stops, staring at it.*) Hello, here's something written on the back ! (*Comes down.*) A note—signed J. H. J. H. ! June Haverhill, of course ! What can it be ? (*Reads with growing surprise and horror.*) "My Beloved. I am here because I must be near you. I cannot stay away. You will doubtless consider this very sudden but my love has burst into flame. Meet me here this evening at ten, if there is any hope for me. I am wholly thine. J. H." Good heavens ! She has changed her mind ! (*Sinks weakly into chair.*) This is terrible, terrible ! That she should have followed me here to claim my promise. (*Springing up.*) I must get away and think ! Think ! My head is splitting ! (*Looking at letter.*) "My love has burst into flame. I am wholly thine." Horrible ! Horrible ! "Meet me here this evening if there is any hope for me." I can't meet her. Hang it, I must meet her ! I must get away and think it out ! (*Rushes out R.*)

Enter HUME, L., crawling on hands and knees, carefully scrutinizing the ground.

HUME. I must have dropped it somewhere along this path.

I must find it, for if any one should pick it up, the contents might be greatly misunderstood. (*Kneeling upright in consternation at the thought.*) Heavens! My notes for conversation when calling on a rich and stingy old lady—my letter to Dorothy! (*Resuming his crawling.*) I must find it! (*He peers on and under the bench, then crawls back to the table and peers under it and under the chairs. Last of all he glances on top of the table and seeing the book, rises, carefully dusting his knees.*) Thank providence, here it is! (*Fluttering the leaves.*) My notes for a call in case of death—of accident—my letter to Dorothy—my letter to Dorothy—where is my letter to Dorothy! (*Anxiously turning pages.*) Torn out! The page has been torn out. (*He pauses aghast; his eyes fall on the red rose which DOR. left on the table. He takes it up and stares at it incredulously.*) It is like the one she gave me yesterday. I understand! She has taken my letter and this is her reply. (*Kisses the rose rapturously.*) She will meet me this evening! I must compose some suitable remarks for the occasion. Yes, I will do it at once. (*Starts out R. carrying rose and note-book; stops and turns to say rapturously.*) How adorably she will conduct the mission sewing classes—and the mothers' meetings! [*Exit, R.*]

Enter through garden gate, C., ROB. and JUNE.

JUNE (*jubilantly*). I told you I'd beat you! You can't say that you weren't fairly warned.

ROB. (*with a large air*). Oh, of course! I let you beat me because you're company and a girl.

JUNE (*with mock severity*). I can't endure a person who won't own up to being beaten.

ROB. Please can't you endure me? I'll own up to anything you say.

JUNE. Neither can I endure a person that cringes.

ROB. Then I won't. (*Severely.*) You're cross. Sit down and get cool a minute before you go in.

JUNE. A command?

ROB. A humble request.

JUNE (*sits L. of table*). Have I really time?

ROB. (*looking at his watch*). Sure. It's only half-past six. Nobody is thinking of waking up yet. (*He sits on the table, back half towards audience, looking down at her. After a moment's pause.*) Must you honestly go to-day?

JUNE. I honestly must.

ROB. I hate to have you. I've been restless and discontented for so long—ever since I saw you last—and I've wanted something dreadfully and not dared to own up what. But I know now—I have to own up. It was you.

JUNE. It's been awfully jolly.

(She is rolling down her shirt-waist sleeves, bending her head over the task.)

ROB. I wish we could have one more game.

JUNE. Imagine mother's horror if this prank ever leaked out. And I'm afraid Max Ten Eyck does recognize me. So to-day your sister's new maid will mysteriously disappear.

(She is struggling to fasten her cuff-links.)

ROB. Let me do it.

JUNE *(holds her hands out to him. He fastens the cuffs and keeps the hands prisoner, looking down at her. She meets his eyes squarely for a moment, then turns away)*. Don't spoil it all by being a goose, Bobby. It's taking advantage.

ROB. *(still keeping her hands in his)*. Well, some time when you are properly chaperoned, may I?

JUNE *(softly)*. Perhaps.

ROB. *(releases her hands and straightens up)*. Thank you.

(There is a short pause. Then JUNE rises.)

JUNE. I must go back to the house, now.

ROB. *(also rising)*. I suppose you must. Shall I see you again?

JUNE. If you do you mustn't speak to me. I'll be Ellen, then, you know.

ROB. *(holding out his hand)*. Then au revoir, June.

(JUNE gives him her hand. As she does so MOL. appears at L., RICH. at R. Both stand frozen with astonishment.)

JUNE. Au revoir.

ROB. It's confoundedly hard to be good.

JUNE. But you must! Au revoir, Bobby.

(They turn away from each other, simultaneously catching sight of RICH. and MOL. At the same moment DOR. appears C., MAX L. and HUME R. JUNE and ROB. stand back to back, staring in horrified silence. HUME clears his throat and advances nervously towards them.)

HUME (*mechanically*). I just came across through the garden hoping I might be of service.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*The same corner of the garden about ten o'clock in the evening of the same day. A string of Japanese lanterns extends from the wall to a large tree at L. These furnish the only light. The table at R. is covered by a dainty cloth and bears a punch-bowl of lemonade and glasses. Gay cushions are on bench and chairs. Music is heard off now and then during the act.*

(*RICH. is discovered sitting on the bench, L. MOL. is ladling out a glass of lemonade.*)

RICH. This is pretty fine. It's worth the whole day of stringing lanterns and moving furniture to have a cozy minute with you here.

MOL. (*taking him lemonade*). Hush! Aren't you ashamed! Cosy corners were not constructed for old married people like us. They're for the young and frivolous.

RICH. (*drawing her down on the bench beside him*). Well, come and sit beside me, old married person, while I enjoy my hard-earned lemonade. I've been discussing fashions with the oldest Miss Patterson—the deaf one.

MOL. You poor dear! (*Laughing.*) Wish I could have heard your efforts to appear intelligent!

RICH. (*seriously*). Gussets are coming in. The favorite materials this season are to be polka-dotted pannel velvet and —

MOL. Don't be stupid, Rich! You know better, and if you don't I'll take you shopping with me and teach you.

RICH. (*fervently*). Heaven forefend!

MOL. (*rises and goes about straightening lanterns, patting cushions, etc.*). Doesn't everything look pretty? Everything is quite perfect except Max's being called away. I know Dorothy is disappointed, though of course she wouldn't say a word.

RICH. Yes, I've been a bit bothered about Max. I am afraid that it must have been pretty serious news to make him rush off that way before breakfast.

MOL. I don't believe he even found out about my wonderful maid's turning into Miss Haverhill. Isn't she a dear?

RICH. Pretty jolly little girl. The way she stuck it out and made you listen to her explanation and apology was all right. It takes nerve to face you when you're dignified, Molly!

MOL. (*meaningly*). Thanks! I shall remember! And Rich, you think it was all right for me to insist on her staying over to-night as our guest, don't you? I felt as though I *must* keep her and make up for having let her clean silver and make salad-dressing yesterday!

RICH. Sure. Just the thing. She has helped a lot to-day, too.

MOL. So has Dorothy. They've been perfectly dear, both of them. They would do it!

RICH. They've had a good time over it. You should have seen them bossing Bob! I never saw him work before!

MOL. (*clasping her hands, delightedly*). Rich! *Do* you think Bob likes her? This is the first time I've ever seen him take any interest!

RICH. (*rising and going over to her*). You little match-maker!

MOL. (*delightedly*). You think so too! I know you do! Let's go and see what they are doing.

RICH. (*tucking her hand under his arm*). I believe you are planning to be matron of honor, already!

(*They go out together, L. Immediately, MAX enters at the gate, C. He looks tired and is not in evening dress.*)

MAX. I thought they would never go! If anybody had seen me skulking in the dark outside the gate, I shouldn't have blamed them for having me arrested for a suspicious character. (*Sits on bench, L.*) But I couldn't face those dear people. They would have asked me why I bolted. A pretty excuse to put up that I've been wandering around New York all day in the heat, trying to make up my mind to do the square thing and keep my word to June! If I only hadn't found out that I was in love with Dorothy it wouldn't have been so bad. But who'd have thought that June would change her mind! (*Looks at his watch.*) Nearly time for the interview! Brace up, old man! (*Rising, squares his shoulders determinedly.*) You've got to go through with it. (*Looks off L.*) Heavens! Here she comes now, with Rich! I can't let him see me.

(*Steps back through the gate.*)

Enter JUNE and RICH., L.

JUNE. I am especially proud of this corner, for it was all my idea. Don't you think it pretty, Mr. Ford?

RICH. It effects me like a magnet. I keep coming back to it. Was the lemonade your idea, too?

JUNE. I'll have to own up that Mrs. Ford supplied that.

RICH. Let me give you some.

JUNE. No, thank you. I should freeze. It's so much colder, out here away from the house.

RICH. You ought to have a wrap. Let me get one for you.

JUNE. Thank you, perhaps I ought to have one. There is a little silk shawl hanging on the veranda railing that is mine.

RICH. I'll find it. Won't be a minute.

(JUNE seats herself by the table. As RICH. goes out L., MAX enters C.)

MAX (*nervous but determined*). I beg pardon.

JUNE (*turning*). Why Max Ten Eyck, when did you come back? Mr. Ford was just speaking of you.

MAX. I haven't seen any of the people yet. I wanted to talk with you first.

JUNE (*puzzled by his manner*). To me? Of course, if you like. Sit down.

MAX. I'd rather stand, thank you. (*Takes a turn across the stage, comes back and faces JUNE.*) I recognized you at once yesterday morning, but it was very stupid of me to show it.

JUNE (*laughing*). I don't see how you could have helped showing it! What must you have thought of me?

MAX (*solemnly*). I understood why you were here.

JUNE. You did! Well, I think you were very clever to guess. Bob knew, of course, but I had to tell him.

MAX (*horrified*). You explained the purpose of your coming to Bob!

JUNE. Oh, yes, I had to! You see, we were such old friends that I couldn't avoid it. He promised to help me.

MAX (*aside*). He might have warned me. I didn't think this of Bob.

JUNE (*going on, placidly*). He thought it was a great lark. (MAX drops on bench, aghast.) Don't look so disapproving! Mrs. Ford knows all about it now and she doesn't mind a bit.

She was ever so dear about it—made me stay over as her guest for this evening.

MAX (*aside*). For this interview of course. (*To JUNE.*) Does—ah—Miss March—also understand the situation?

JUNE. Yes, indeed. We are getting to be great friends.

MAX (*aside*). Dorothy, too! What must she think of me!

JUNE. But here I am, monopolizing the conversation, and there was something you wanted to talk with me about. What was it?

MAX (*rising*). I merely wished to say—that—that I stand by what I said. I am yours to command.

JUNE (*also rising; surprised*). Stand by what you said? What can you mean!

MAX. I wish to live up to the promise I made—you know—the last time I saw you.

JUNE. The promise—why I don't recall any promise.

MAX (*quite agonized; mopping his forehead*). That I would never—care for—any one else.

JUNE (*with dignity*). Mr. Ten Eyck, you seem to forget your engagement to Miss March. I do not.

MAX (*mournfully*). It is broken off. Quite broken off.

JUNE. Impossible!

MAX. Here are the proofs. We each wrote out statements. Here is mine. (*Produces folded paper from his pocket.*) Please read it.

JUNE (*glancing at paper*). "My beloved. I am here because I must be near you." Mr. Ten Eyck, I fail to see why you should ask me to read your love letters?

MAX (*distressed*). Forgive me. The statement is on the other side. I had forgotten that your note was on the same paper.

JUNE. My note! What do you mean?

MAX. Why, yes. The note you left for me.

JUNE (*again glancing at paper*). "Wholly thine. J. H." Mr. Ten Eyck! You don't mean to say that you thought me guilty of this!

MAX. Of course. Didn't you write it?

JUNE (*disgusted*). I never saw it before! (*There is a pause during which they stare blankly at each other. Suddenly JUNE bursts into a gay peal of laughter.*) Oh, oh, oh! I see! You thought I had changed my mind about accepting you!

MAX. And you haven't!

JUNE. Of course not! Oh, how absurd!

MAX (*joyfully*). June, you angel! I'm so glad! I mean, of course, I'm so sorry! No, I don't either. Please forgive me for being such an idiot.

JUNE. Of course. Why it's as clear as day. My peculiar actions—and then the note! Who *could* have written that note!

MAX. It is intended for a joke, I suppose!

JUNE. It couldn't have been Bob!

MAX. Of course! He was the only person who could have done it! The scamp!

JUNE. It was perfectly abominable!

MAX. I'll wring his neck!

JUNE. I'll never forgive him! The idea of his daring!

Enter ROB. hastily, with shawl over his arm.

ROB. I say, June, I made Rich let me bring this. It wasn't on the veranda but it must be yours. (*Seeing MAX; surprised.*) Why, hello, Max!

JUNE (*to MAX, utterly ignoring ROB.*). Please take me back to the house. It's a little cool here!

MAX. Certainly. With pleasure.

(*JUNE and MAX go off, L., without noticing ROB., who stands frozen with astonishment. The shawl slips to the ground.*)

ROB. Now, what in thunder!

Enter HUME, R.

HUME (*with his ordinary nervousness*). It is a beautiful evening.

ROB. Hang the evening! (*Rushes off, L.*)

HUME (*complacently*). It *is* a beautiful evening. It is nearly ten o'clock and soon she will come. If only I were not so nervous! I know I shall forget what I intended to say. (*Sits himself, produces note-book and finds place.*) This should be effective, if I do not become confused. I might rehearse a few sentences. No one is about. (*Rises and goes towards L.; speaks as though addressing some one.*) "At last you have come. Each moment seemed an age!" (*Suiting action to the word; with imaginary person.*) "Ah, won't you sit down——" Did that come next? (*Referring to note-book.*) Yes. I lead her to a chair—this chair. Then I

kneel beside her. (*Kneels just in front of shawl which ROB. dropped.*)

Enter DOR. hastily, L., calling.

DOR. Bob! Why did you run off with Mrs. Carter's wrap? (*Sees HUME kneeling beside shawl and holds out her hand for it.*) Yes. That is the one. Thank you.

(*HUME meekly hands her the shawl and she is about to hurry away but he catches her dress, still kneeling.*)

HUME. Stay a moment! I have so much to say to you. Do stay!

DOR. (*seating herself*). I oughtn't to stay but a minute or two, Mr. Hume. Bob rushed off with Mrs. Carter's shawl and I promised to find it for her.

HUME (*rising*). Exactly. (*In precisely the same tone as when rehearsing.*) "At last you have come. Each moment seemed an age."

DOR. (*puzzled*). What?

HUME (*more embarrassed*). "Each moment seemed an age."

DOR. (*amused*). Oh, I see. Thank you. (*Aside.*) What a compliment!

HUME (*still in same tone, and with same gesture towards imaginary person*). "Oh, won't you sit down?" (*Stops abruptly, confused.*)

DOR. Why I *am* sitting down!

HUME. Yes, you are sitting down. We can pass over that. (*Referring to note-book.*) Now I kneel. (*Does so.*)

DOR. (*rising; distressed*). Oh, please get up, Mr. Hume! Somebody might see you!

HUME. What difference! It will soon be known.

DOR. What will soon be known?

HUME (*rising*). That you have promised to be mine.

DOR. Oh, no indeed! That will never be known.

HUME. Why not? "The red, red rose of love has—has ——"

(*Hunting for place in note-book.*)

DOR. I'm sorry, but I'm perfectly certain that Mrs. Carter wants her shawl. (*Starts to go.*)

HUME (*desperately*). But the red, red rose of love? Your answer to my note?

DOR. I don't know what you are talking about. I haven't received any note from you, Mr. Hume.

HUME. This morning in the garden. You *were* in the garden this morning.

DOR. Why yes, but —

HUME (*triumphantly*). I knew that you were. And the note—the rose—they were there too!

Enter MAX, L.

DOR. (*hastening to MAX*). Max, what does he mean by the note and the rose? He is so strange, I'm half afraid of him.

MAX. What's that? A note?

DOR. In the garden this morning.

MAX. Jove! That explains it! (*Advancing to HUME.*) "My beloved, I am here."

HUME. Sir! I—I beg pardon, but what right have you to peruse my private correspondence?

MAX. I apologize! I thought I was perusing my own private correspondence. (*Taking the note from his pocket.*) Here, Dorothy! This must be yours.

DOR. (*glancing at note*). Mr. Hume, I am terribly sorry, but I guess I'd better not read it. You see I am—engaged.

MAX (*promptly*). Yes. She is engaged to me. We are engaged to each other.

HUME. Good heavens! Engaged! I beg pardon! I was not aware —

MAX (*complacently*). Don't mention it, Mr. Hume! We don't mind in the least!

DOR. (*sweetly, holding out her hand*). And thank you so much, Mr. Hume! (*HUME takes her hand, opens his mouth several times without saying anything, then drops her hand and rushes out, c.* DOR. *turns to MAX.*) You needn't have—said that. I just thought it was the kindest way to tell him.

MAX. I didn't mind doing it in the least. I rather enjoyed it.

DOR. But how did you come by the note?

MAX. Found it in the garden this morning.

DOR. I don't want to read it.

(*Tears the paper across.*)

MAX (*eagerly*). Dorothy! Do you know what you have torn?

DOR. No. Why, what do you mean?

MAX. Look on the other side.

DOR. (*turns paper over, holding the torn fragments together*). "I hereby declare that I refuse to fulfil the conditions of the will left by Mrs. Cordelia Day, in so far as they pertain to my marriage with Dorothy March." Oh, Max! I'm so sorry I tore it!

MAX. I'm so glad! (*Taking other paper from his pocket*.) Won't you tear this too? (*As DOR. turns away*.) I was an awful fool, Dorothy, but I've learned better. Couldn't you give me another chance?

DOR. You're saying this because you think you ought to!

MAX. Hang it all, dear, don't rub it in! I know I deserve it, but I'm desperately sorry—and I love you. Let's make it true—what we said to the rector-chap.

DOR. (*softly*). That we're engaged?

(*She takes the paper from him, and slowly tears it across.*)

MAX. Dorothy! (*He takes an impulsive step towards her, just as ROB. enters, L.*) Damn!

ROB. (*backing*). I beg pardon!

MAX. Certainly! Don't mind us in the least. We are just going.

(*Puts his arm around DOR., and leads her off, R.*)

ROB. (*looking after them*). Lucky beggar! Now what do you suppose I've done. I tried twice to speak to June, and she simply doesn't see me. Confound it all! And she is going to-morrow!

(*Sits in chair beside table, elbows on knees, head in his hands.*)

Enter JUNE, slowly and softly.

JUNE. I was just too abominable for words to Bob. And I don't believe he could have done it. I can't stand it not to apologize. (*Calls softly*.) Bob!

ROB. (*springs up*). June! Why, June!

JUNE. People are going—the party is 'most over. And I shall go early to-morrow. And I couldn't bear to go away cross after we have had such a lark. I'm sorry. (*Shyly holding out her hand.*)

ROB. (*taking it joyfully*). On my honor, June, I can't think of anything I've done to displease you, but if there was something, I apologize.

JUNE. If your conscience is clear I don't believe you did it. (*Trying to withdraw her hand.*) I must go back to the house, Bob. People are saying good-night.

ROB. But there is something I want to ask you first. What do you think of Molly as a chaperon?

JUNE. Your sister? She is absolute perfection. I'm desperately in love with her.

ROB. Then you consider her quite adequate in that position?

JUNE. Why, of course! How can you be so stupid!

ROB. Do you remember what you said this morning—that I might say—and do—when you were properly chaperoned?

JUNE (*consciously*). Oh!

ROB. (*joyfully*). You do remember! Then it holds good! I'm going to—dear!

JUNE (*turning, gives him both hands*). You may, Bobby!

(*ROB. bends forward and kisses her.*)

Enter simultaneously RICH. and MOL., L., and DOR. and MAX, R.

ROB. Oh, I say, Rich! You're just the man I want to see! Run down to the long distance 'phone, for me, will you?

RICH. What on earth for?

ROB. To get Molly a new maid! This one is going to elope—with me.

CURTAIN

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